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New York

President	Mr. Menan	(Togo)
Members	Argentina	Ms. Millicay
	Australia	Ms. King
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. Briens
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2013/297)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2013/297)

The President (*spoke in French*): Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/297, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas.

I now give the floor to Mr. Moussa.

Mr. Moussa (*spoke in French*): It is my honour and privilege to present the fourth report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/297) on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

As I take the floor this morning, the general situation in Central Africa, politically and in terms of security, is characterized by relative peace and stability in most of the countries of the subregion, with the notable exception of the Central African Republic and some parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As the Security Council knows, developments under way in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are promising, in particular with the signing of the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation in February 2013, under the auspices of the Secretary-General. The situation in Central African Republic, however, continues to have an adverse impact on its neighbouring countries, in particular in terms of refugee flows and transborder crossings of ex-combatants.

Over the past six months, UNOCA has continued to work closely with regional organizations, in particular the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and its member States, as well as with other partners, in order to seek sustainable solutions to the numerous challenges to peace and security in the subregion. To that end, UNOCA, with the support of the Mediation Support Unit, is planning a second capacity-building workshop in the area of mediation in June for ECCAS in order to better use that subregional tool and better carry out its prevention, management, peaceful settlement of conflict mandate.

(*spoke in English*)

During our meeting in December (see S/PV.6891), the Security Council requested UNOCA to work with the African Union (AU) and other stakeholders and partners to develop a prioritized and sequenced implementation plan for the operationalization of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Now that that has been done, the next immediate priority is to organize a resource mobilization forum in support of the implementation of the strategy, in partnership with the African Union.

In that regard, I salute the African Union for the recent convening of a forum in support of the operationalization of the African Union Regional Task Force (AU-RTF). The forum was an important step in the right direction for the preparation of a broader and more inclusive process to mobilize the requisite resources for the implementation of our joint regional strategy.

With regard to the operationalization of the AU-RTF, which is a key component of our joint regional strategy, it is important to highlight some of the challenges encountered that were amply articulated by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security at the opening of the AU Support Forum on 24 April in Addis Ababa. According to Ambassador Lamamra, the contingents handed over to the RTF face real logistical challenges that constitute major obstacles, in that, with the exception of the Ugandan contingents, the troops are being confined to their respective bases and far from being able to initiate expected military operations.

Those challenges are compounded by the current political and security crisis in the Central African Republic. The situation has a direct impact on the operationalization of the RTF in that country. However,

reassuring signals have been received from Bangui following a fact-finding mission to the Central African Republic in April by Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army Issues, Ambassador Francisco Caetano José Madeira. As confirmed by Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye, the Central African Republic authorities are ready to continue to cooperate with the international community, in particular the AU and United Nations, in pursuing the fight against the LRA.

The Security Council approved the LRA strategy last June (see S/PV.6796). We have finalized the implementation plan, which identifies present needs and the areas in which additional resources are required. We therefore count on the continued political goodwill and financial commitment of all stakeholders, particularly the LRA-affected countries and the major partners, to translate those plans into reality.

Another major source of security concern for the subregion is the ongoing military operations by the Nigerian armed forces against Boko Haram insurgents in the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Following a week of military operations in the three states, which were placed under a state of emergency, Nigeria's military announced on 20 May that it had reasserted control in five remote areas of the north-east, close to the borders with Cameroon and Chad, where the Islamist insurgents had seized territory.

The potential humanitarian consequences and cross-border impact of Nigeria's military offensive for the countries of the subregion have yet to be fully assessed. However, thousands of refugees have reportedly fled the military offensive into neighbouring Cameroon and Chad, with the military claiming that some Boko Haram insurgents had been prevented from fleeing into neighbouring Chad and the Niger.

The current political and security situation in northern Mali continues to have a negative impact on the countries that have sent troops there. Following the twin attacks on a military base in Agades and a French-run uranium mine, the President of the Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, claimed that those involved in the attacks, which left more than two dozen dead, entered his country from southern Libya. He also warned that further attacks were being planned against Chad.

The issue of poaching is another emerging and rapidly growing phenomenon that has the potential to have a negative impact on the already challenging peace and security situation in some parts of the subregion. Over the past five months or so, there have been increasing and at times alarming reports underscoring the gravity of that threat. We gather that at least 26 elephants were recently massacred by poachers at the World Heritage Site of Dzanga Bai, in south-eastern Central African Republic. The same reports further claim that Central Africa has been regularly hit by poaching operations and that in February 2012 at least 300 elephants were killed for their ivory in northern Cameroon. The efforts made by the countries of the subregion to address that challenge need to be encouraged.

Another major challenge for the advent of sustainable peace and development in the Central African subregion is the thorny issue of youth unemployment. Cognizant of the destabilizing effects of growing youth unemployment on the subregion, UNOCA has engaged in efforts to facilitate the organization of a subregional conference to discuss the impact of youth unemployment on the consolidation of peace. Those efforts will continue to be pursued vigorously in partnership with ECCAS, the African Development Bank, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and some key regional and international partners and stakeholders.

In my statement to the Council on 18 December 2012 (see S/PV.6891), I pledged that UNOCA would continue to place a premium on building on and consolidating the achievements registered during that year. That included redoubling efforts to accelerate the operationalization of the regional strategy to address the threat posed by the LRA through the early finalization of the relevant programmatic document; the pursuit of ongoing efforts towards the organization of a the regional summit on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, as recommended by the Council in its resolution 2039 (2012), of 29 February 2012; and enhancing our capacity-building and institution-strengthening support to subregional organizations, particularly ECCAS.

Looking back, I can humbly state that we have fulfilled that pledge, at times under very challenging circumstances, including dwindling resources. Therefore, as we enter the second half of 2013, I would like to renew my pledge to pursue those efforts and build on the progress made thus far in the implementation of our mandate under the overall guidance and orientation of the Council.

I thank the members of the Security Council for their strong and continued support for UNOCA.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Moussa for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Special Representative, Mr. Moussa, for his briefing.

At present the countries of Central Africa are actively committed to the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of economic and social development, and the strengthening of regional integration. They have achieved positive results in that regard.

At the same time, Central Africa continues to face many challenges in the area of peace and security. The situation in the Central African Republic and the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains turbulent. The threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has not been eradicated, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea also remains a challenge. The cooperation of the countries of the region and of the international community is therefore required.

China would like to make the following four points.

First, the international community should actively assist the countries of Central Africa in efforts to achieve peace and stability. China is deeply concerned about the tensions in the Central African Republic and the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that the parties concerned will abandon all forms of violence and resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiation.

We support the countries in the region and regional and subregional organizations in their efforts to resolve those problems. We urge the international community to provide support to the relevant countries and organizations on the basis of full respect for the sovereignty of the countries of the region. China welcomes the recent visit by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries of the region. We thank him for the important role he has played in helping to resolve the issue of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in an appropriate manner.

Secondly, the international community must continue to support the countries of the region in the fight against the LRA, which continues to operate in many countries of the region. The deterioration of the security situation in the Central African Republic is having a negative impact on the efforts of the countries of the region to combat the LRA. China strongly condemns the attacks carried out by the LRA against civilians and demands its immediate disarmament.

We appreciate the efforts made by the countries of the region in the fight against the LRA, and we support the efforts of the African Union (AU) to implement regional cooperation initiatives. We welcome the cooperation between the United Nations and the AU in that regard. We expect that there will be effective implementation of the relevant United Nations regional strategy and plans of action.

Thirdly, the international community should continue to be concerned about the ongoing threats of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, arms trafficking and transnational organized crime. We support the efforts of the countries in the region to formulate and improve the relevant country strategies, with a view to strengthening governance and law enforcement. We appreciate the leadership of and coordinating role played by the relevant regional organizations. The international community should provide the necessary support to the countries concerned through information-sharing, the exchange of experiences, technical assistance and capacity-building, as well as the adoption of integrated policies aimed at tackling the relevant issues and their root causes, with a focus on economic and social development as well as other key aspects.

Fourthly, the United Nations should play a greater role in achieving lasting peace in Central Africa. China is grateful to the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) for its continuing efforts to fulfil the Security Council's mandate and maintain regional peace and stability. We hope that it will continue its synergistic role in communicating between, and coordinating the efforts of the United Nations system, regional organizations and the relevant countries in the region. China will continue to support the work of UNOCA and Special Representative Moussa.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Mr. Abou

Moussa, for his comprehensive briefing. I will first discuss the efforts to combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) before commenting on the Central African Republic and UNOCA's activity.

For 25 years now the LRA has been striking at the heart of Africa. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, its systematic violations of international law, human rights and international humanitarian law have resulted in more than 100,000 deaths, between 60,000 and 100,000 children abducted and 2.5 million people displaced. Two hundred and twelve attacks were reported last year alone, resulting in at least 45 deaths and 220 abductions, 25 per cent of which involved children. More than 60 attacks and 30 deaths were reported during the first quarter of 2013, and March saw a disturbing jump in attacks, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While the LRA's forces have definitely lessened over the years, they continue to pose a serious threat to the region and its civilian population. We must therefore remain on our guard. In that regard, we commend today's draft presidential statement, which signals the Security Council's determination to fight the scourge that is the LRA.

In order to eliminate this threat, the multidimensional regional strategy that the United Nations adopted last year must be vigorously implemented. In that context, we welcome the Secretary-General's announcement, on 19 April, of the gradual implementation plan for the regional strategy. We hope that the plan's more systematic approach, coordinated by UNOCA, as well as the implementation of the regional strategy's various priority projects, will help strengthen the fight against the LRA. The implementation plan's communication strategy, as well as meetings such as this one, will help ensure that combating the LRA remains a priority on the international community's agenda.

We welcome the progress made in implementing the African Union's Regional Cooperation Initiative to combat the LRA, the first of the five steps that make up the regional strategy of the United Nations. We especially welcome the finalization of the strategic documents needed to activate the African Union Regional Task Force against the Lord's Resistance Army. We encourage States affected by the LRA to provide the contingents required in order to reach the authorized strength of 5,000 troops. For its part, Luxembourg undertakes to make a voluntary financial contribution to support the strengthening of the Regional Task Force. It is vital that the United Nations and the African Union continue to work closely in this area. The joint awareness and mobilization mission conducted from 27 March to 4 April in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Special Envoy of the African Union, Mr. Francisco Madeira, is a good example of the synergy that can result in this way.

The efforts of the United Nations and the African Union are not enough. The primary responsibility for protecting their civilian populations from the threat of the LRA rests with the authorities of the countries that are directly affected by its violent actions. Generally speaking, we encourage all States to cooperate in executing the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court almost eight years ago for Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen. Those leaders of the LRA, accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and child recruitment, must be brought to justice.

Sadly, it cannot be repeated too often that women and children are the LRA's main victims. In that context, we would like to recall the conclusions reached on 19 April by the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict on the situation of child victims of the LRA. I will highlight three of their recommendations: first, the need for the United Nations to keep sufficient means for protecting children at the heart of its peacekeeping operations and special political missions in the region — and, if such means are lacking, to increase them; secondly, advising the African Union to integrate child protection activities into the work of the Regional Task Force; and, finally, recommending that the World Bank and donors mobilize the resources necessary for liberating, repatriating and reintegrating children formerly associated with the LRA.

The progress that has been made in recent years in the fight against the LRA risks being nullified if security and stability are not restored in the Central African Republic. Operations against the LRA there must be resumed without delay if the country is not to become a sanctuary for this armed group. In general, we share the Secretary-General's extreme concern about the situation in the Central African Republic and its effect on peace and security in the subregion. The total absence of public order, the disastrous humanitarian situation, the continued looting and serious violations of human rights demand a determined response on the

part of the international community and the Security Council in particular in support of the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). All these elements — the ongoing tensions in the central African region, the constant threat of the LRA, the impact of transnational organized crime in every form, including ivory poaching and trafficking, which most likely form a significant source of financing for armed groups, including the LRA — make the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa all the more essential. Luxembourg welcomes UNOCA's efforts to facilitate and encourage closer regional cooperation in central Africa. Its work, particularly in collaboration with ECCAS, has helped improve cooperation in the areas of mediation and good offices.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the work done by UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa in combating piracy off the coasts of States on the Gulf of Guinea, which is an increasing threat to the economies of the States concerned as well as to trade and international relations in the region. Thanks to the good groundwork facilitated by the United Nations, we hope the regional summit of Heads of State and Government on piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea to be held in Cameroon on 24 and 25 June will produce concrete results.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We agree with the alarming assessment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, of the negative impact of the armed conflict in the Central African Republic on neighbouring States, which is reflected, in particular, in the increase over the past six months of the number of refugees to 50,000 and the uncontrolled proliferation of weapons. It is clear that a settlement of the military and political crisis and a normalization of the humanitarian and human rights situation in the country are extremely important for the prospects for peace, security and stability in the subregion.

We share the concern about the increasing scale of cross-border crime, including poaching, in which weapons from Libya have been used. We are particularly concerned that the product of those crimes could be a source of financing for the terrorist and criminal groups operating in the subregion.

We welcome the mobilization of cooperation among interested countries and organizations in the fight against piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea. An important step in that direction could be the summit of Central and West African States to be held in June. We see the need to take necessary measures to address potential factors for instability in the subregion, including poverty and the growing gap in income distribution, as well as widespread unemployment, especially among young people.

We note a decline in the activity of the Lord's Resistance Army, whose fighters have recently kept a low profile and withdrawn to hard-to-reach border areas of the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We note particular difficulties in the practical implementation of the United Nations strategy to combat the Lord's Resistance Army. The deployment of the African Union Regional Task Force has been delayed, due in large part to problems with funding. As a result of criminal activities, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons totals 440,000 people, which, among other things, reflects the ineffectiveness of measures to protect civilians. In addition, there is a lack of funding in general for the humanitarian needs of those suffering from the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army.

We have taken note of the adoption in April of the implementation plan for the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (S/2013/240, annex). The plan is ambitious and costly. We must note that, in addition to its timely and needed measures, it also stipulates the implementation of a number of projects that would be difficult to call relevant at this time, in particular with regard to the Central African Republic.

In conclusion, I note the contribution of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa to collective efforts to ensure peace and security in the subregion. We welcome the growing cooperation between the Office and regional partners in such areas as preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, combating terrorism, piracy and armed robbery at sea, the proliferation of weapons, support for electoral processes and the training of national staff.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Special Representative Abou Moussa for his briefing this morning.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has blighted the heart of Africa for over 20 years. It remains what it always was — a thuggish band of criminals who prey

on civilians, target women and children, and terrorize communities. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that the LRA can no longer inflict its odious brand of suffering.

An end to the scourge of the LRA is within sight. The concerted efforts of the affected countries, the African Union (AU), the United Nations and other partners have substantially weakened the LRA, but we must not lose focus. The permanent eradication of the LRA requires our continued attention and the creation and consolidation of security and stability in the affected countries. Events in the Central African Republic, as others have already noted, threaten to undermine progress. The United Kingdom calls upon all regional countries to participate fully in the fight against the LRA. We must not allow the LRA to regroup, as it has done previously when close to extinction.

The United Kingdom welcomes the development of an implementation plan for the United Nations strategy on the LRA. It is essential that the priority tasks identified in the plan be swiftly carried out, that the timelines be met, and that the United Nations articulate effectively to donors which elements of the strategy are currently underfunded.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the advocacy undertaken by Special Representative Moussa and AU Special Envoy Madeira with LRA-affected countries and the finalization of the strategic documents for the operationalization of the African Union Regional Task Force against the LRA. That will significantly improve tactical coordination, information-sharing and joint planning between the relevant armed forces.

I would now like to comment on the broader role of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). The United Kingdom welcomes the efforts of UNOCA to facilitate and encourage closer regional collaboration in Central Africa. Helping the subregional organizations and their Member States to develop strategies and capabilities for addressing the problems they face is a crucial task. The evidently close working relationship that Special Representative Moussa and UNOCA have developed with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) can valuably help improve regional cooperation.

Events in the Central African Republic require a regional solution. The United Kingdom expects UNOCA to remain engaged with ECCAS on this and to play a key role in achieving a unified regional position. It is important that UNOCA support the work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Vogt and her team.

The United Kingdom remains concerned by the threats to maritime security on Africa's western seaboard, and welcomes the leadership shown by the United Nations on that issue. UNOCA has an important role to play in ensuring that the international community works together to build maritime security capability. A regional response is essential to minimizing the impact on economic development and stability. Timetables must not be allowed to slip.

UNOCA should be playing a strong role in all the challenges for which regional coordination is essential. At a time when resources are tight and demands on the United Nations are high, UNOCA must add real value to regional and subregional efforts. The United Kingdom would therefore welcome greater clarity in the Secretary-General's next report on what specifically UNOCA is doing to add such value and what outcomes it has helped to achieve.

Lastly, I thank Council colleagues for their support for the presidential statement, which the United Kingdom delegation prepared and which the Council will shortly adopt.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, for his briefing on the situation in Central African Republic, the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), and the efforts to combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The many political and security challenges in Central Africa require additional cooperation from all national, regional, subregional and United Nations stakeholders. In that regard, we welcome the connections made between UNOCA and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

In addition to the workshops and conferences that are organized on a regular basis at the initiative of UNOCA, it is crucial for the Office, as a matter of priority, to concentrate its activities on prevention and support for efforts to resolve the conflicts within the subregion. The crisis in the Central African Republic, the crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the

Congo and the fight against the LRA are matters for follow-up by subregional organizations, the African Union and the relevant United Nations peacekeeping operations and offices. In that context, UNOCA's know-how should be drawn upon to directly support those efforts.

The situation in Bangui and throughout the Central African Republic following the takeover by Séléka continues to be most worrisome. In spite of announced measures to enforce the cantonment of Séléka troops, public order remains tenuous. Human rights violations and looting continue. Civilians are the primary targets of the violence, which further complicates the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Stabilizing the security situation must therefore be the priority. We welcome the ECCAS decision to strengthen the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX). Cooperation between the ECCAS, the African Union and the United Nations must continue to assess how the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, could support the strengthening of MICOPAX, which is necessary to ensure the re-establishment of order and protect the people in the Central African Republic.

The crisis in the Central African Republic is taking on an ever-broader regional dimension. Humanitarian needs are growing every day. At the moment, there are approximately 206,000 displaced persons and 50,000 refugees, primarily in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo. One million three-hundred thousand people are in a situation of food insecurity. Against that backdrop, the international humanitarian response remains, for the time being, much too weak. The urgent appeal launched by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has only been covered up to 27 per cent of the total requested.

On the political front, the efforts of ECCAS and the N'Djamena summits of 3 and 18 April allowed for the development of a transition framework with a view to the holding of elections in 18 months. The contact group meeting in Brazzaville on 3 May confirmed that positive momentum and encouraged the partners of the Central African Republic to support the transition. With the support of the international community, the Prime Minister and the transitional authorities must together make every effort to ensure that the agreed objectives are met, especially that of strengthening the representative character of the transitional authorities.

While the efforts to stabilize the Central African Republic continue, the fight against the threat posed by the LRA must also continue tirelessly. The rebels led by Joseph Kony, who is himself sought by the International Criminal Court (ICC), continue their atrocities, primarily in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also in the Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. Over 25 years, the group has killed more than 100,000 people in Central Africa. And it has kidnapped or forcibly recruited between 60,000 and 100,000 children and displaced 2.5 million people.

We welcome the concrete progress made by the African Union to strengthen the tools for fighting the LRA. The African Union Regional Task Force against the Lord's Resistance Army now comprises 3,500 troops. Its concept of operations and rules of engagement have been finalized. We encourage close cooperation between the Regional Task Force and the United Nations peacekeeping operations on the ground to achieve the disarmament and demobilization of the LRA rebels, the arrest and transfer to the ICC of its leaders, and better protection of civilian populations.

In terms of the role of the United Nations, UNOCA has developed an implementation plan for the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (S/2013/240, annex). Presented last April, that plan details the funding needed for projects to combat the LRA conducted by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. The plan will allow for a better structuring of international efforts. However, it must be further developed and updated to ensure the effectiveness of the efforts undertaken.

Moreover, peacekeeping operations involved in the fight against the LRA, such as the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have their own monitoring and coordination mechanisms regarding attacks and locations of members of the LRA. They must actively employ those tools to encourage fighters to defect and to welcome deserters, especially children.

I would like to conclude by addressing a worrisome trend that the Special Representative of the Secretary-

General also touched upon, that is, the growing scope of poaching in Central Africa to fund criminal activities, including terrorism. This phenomenon, which threatens both the security of the region and endangered species, is now well established. In that regard, cooperation between States in the region, ECCAS, the African Union and United Nations must be stepped up.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Mr. Abou Moussa, for his briefing regarding the latest developments. We also thank the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2013/297).

We support the efforts of UNOCA to support initiatives aimed at resolving the numerous and varied challenges facing the countries of the Central African region. We would like to address our particular concerns with regard to the developments in the Central African Republic, which have undoubtedly affected the entire subregion. We therefore hope that UNOCA can continue coordinating the efforts of the United Nations system with those of subregional bodies, such as the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the African Union, seeking to re-establish order in the country. Naturally, in this case as in others, we commend the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional African bodies.

We commend the efforts made by UNOCA to tackle the insecurity created by piracy and criminal activities in the Gulf of Guinea. We believe it is vitally important that there be cooperation as promoted by UNOCA to support the preparations for the holding in June of a summit of Heads of State and Government on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. We hope that the summit will be successful in tackling this threat to security in the subregion.

UNOCA must also work for the various States of Central Africa to respond the problem of the illegal exploitation of natural resources, especially the illegal poaching of elephants, which has been reported in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad and Gabon — a topic mentioned by Mr. Moussa in his briefing and taken up by the representative of France.

Our delegation believes it is important for UNOCA to continue coordinating specific peacebuilding efforts in the subregion, especially in the areas of institution-building, electoral processes, mediation and good offices for conflict prevention. There are conflict situations that must be tackled, such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region, which I will not address now since the Democratic Republic of the Congo is on the agenda for this afternoon. However, it is worth mentioning that efforts must be made in other States that need to be brought out of conflict by peacebuilding processes. We do not want to see a recurrence of the situation that affected the Central African Republic. We hope that the next ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa will succeed in producing proposals for improving security in the Central African subregion.

With regard to the threat that the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to pose, we reiterate our concern at the severe impact that that armed group and its criminal activities continue to have in the region, in particular in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Uganda. We condemn the atrocities which that group continues to commit. While we take note of the fact that reports show a decrease in its activities, we believe that efforts must be redoubled to eliminate once and for all the threat posed by its very existence.

We reiterate our support to the United Nations regional strategy for the LRA (S/2012/481, annex). We commend the progress that has been made in its implementation, including the finalization of operational documents to launch the African Union Regional Task Force against the LRA. We hope that countries will enable the contributions and troop deployment that are still needed to complete the Force. We welcome the finalization of the priority implementation plan for the regional strategy, and we hope that it will serve as a guide for concrete actions to be taken to alleviate the suffering of the population in LRA-affected areas.

We call for efforts to be redoubled in executing the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court for Joseph Kony and LRA commanders for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including assassinations, rapes and the recruitment of children through kidnapping. We encourage all States to cooperate with the Court to execute those warrants and bring those responsible for these atrocities to justice.

In closing, we express our support for the presidential statement to be adopted today.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa for his briefing.

For almost three decades, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has wreaked havoc and perpetrated mass atrocities on the people of Central Africa and the Great Lakes region. The LRA has killed, maimed and displaced thousands. It has abducted children and forced them to commit unspeakable horrors. It has destroyed families and communities. Its acts are unconscionable and must be stopped once and for all.

The Council has repeatedly condemned LRA atrocities and supported decisive measures to end them. Our goal of permanently ending the LRA threat is within reach, but it will require sustained regional leadership and international support. The United States commends the African Union (AU) and Governments of the region, in particular Uganda, for their concerted and continuing efforts to neutralize the LRA threat. The United States has provided significant assistance to support those regional efforts, including by sending United States military advisors to enhance the capacity of regional forces to pursue top LRA commanders and protect local populations.

Our common commitment has resulted in notable progress. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that, overall, there was a significant drop in the number of LRA attacks in 2012 compared to 2011. Some of those displaced by the LRA in South Sudan have begun to return home, and two of the LRA's most senior commanders, Caesar Achellam and Vincent Binani Okumu, have been removed from the battlefield, while scores of LRA members have defected or been released. To help bring the LRA's top commanders to justice, the United States, through the war crimes rewards programme, is offering rewards of up to $5 million for information leading to the arrest, transfer or conviction of LRA leaders Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen.

Nevertheless, the LRA remains a regional threat with an outsized impact because of its brutality and reach. Joseph Kony is still at large, and the LRA continues to conduct attacks and commit abductions. Hundreds of thousands of people remain displaced throughout Central Africa because of the LRA. Instability across the region, particularly in the Central African Republic, threatens to halt and potentially reverse progress in the fight against the LRA. The United States believes that counter-LRA operations under the AU Regional Task Force should resume as soon as possible. We welcome the Central African Republic's transitional Government's assurances that counter-LRA operations will continue through the AU Regional Task Force (AU-RTF). Further suspension of military operations in the Central African Republic could allow the LRA to reorganize and further endanger civilians.

Meanwhile, the LRA continues to wreak havoc in other countries of the region, especially the Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Democratic Republic of the Congo suffered 54 LRA attacks between January and March 2013, the most among LRA-affected countries in the region. Forces of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo operating in north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo should renew their efforts to combat the LRA through expanded, more targeted patrols and increased information-sharing. Furthermore, United Nations missions in the region and the AU-RTF need to develop a common picture of the LRA's operating disposition and investigate the LRA's logistical networks and possible sources of illicit financing.

The United Nations comprehensive regional strategy (S/2012/481, annex) is critical to coordinating United Nations and AU action to protect civilians from the LRA and strengthen the resilience of local communities. The United States fully supports the strategy and welcomes the new implementation plan produced by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). We hope that this will translate swiftly into action in the region, and in particular we urge rapid implementation of the standard operating procedures for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration and greater focus on roads and infrastructure projects to increase humanitarian access in the region. We request the Secretary-General to ensure that UNOCA has the staffing, particularly the technical experts, it needs to do so.

As we work to end the LRA's campaign of terror, we must also address the crisis in the Central African Republic, where the breakdown of law and order, ongoing human rights abuses and the dire humanitarian situation pose a serious threat to regional stability. The

United States applauds and appreciates the efforts of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to ameliorate the humanitarian suffering amid a challenging operating environment. Central African Republic authorities, however, bear the primary responsibility for protecting civilians and must do much more in this regard, particularly for women and children. They need to bring the Séléka fighters under control immediately, facilitate humanitarian access throughout the country, and enable a political transition. Perpetrators of human rights violations committeed by both sides during the recent fighting must be held to account.

In addition to the LRA and instability in the Central African Republic, piracy and maritime armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea remain serious security concerns for the region. The United States values UNOCA's support for regional coordination and capacity-building to combat those threats, and looks forward to the regional summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in June 2013, where countries can demonstrate their leadership in addressing them. We also welcome UNOCA's important preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding efforts to promote regional stability, and urge UNOCA's continued attention to the challenges faced by women and girls in the subregion, including female genital mutilation, early forced marriage, denial of access to education and low political participation.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Mr. Abou Moussa, for his presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2013/297). We appreciate the continued commitment of Mr. Moussa to conflict prevention in Central Africa.

The situation in Central Africa has worsened since the last report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/923), due mainly to the crisis in the Central African Republic and the continued presence of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the region. Rwanda is cognizant of the fact that insecurity and statelessness breed criminality and terrorism. Terrorists groups like the LRA exploit the vacuum to wreak more havoc in the community.

We once again express our deepest concern about the situation in the Central African Republic, particularly with regard to human rights violations and the humanitarian crisis caused by the Séléka, which have consequences not only for the Central African Republic but also for all countries of the region. That coalition will be held accountable, and the perpetrators of those crimes will be brought to justice.

We are concerned that the LRA has continued to carry out deadly attacks resulting in civilian casualties, abductions and the displacement of populations. We condemn in the strongest terms the continued violations committed against children by the LRA and its use of rape, sexual slavery and other acts of sexual violence. In that regard, we welcome the tools provided by the conclusions on the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (S/AC.51/2013/1), adopted by the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict on 19 April. We join the Working Group in expressing appreciation for the efforts of the Governments of affected States to promote the protection of children, including the progress made with regard to the operational plan for cross-border repatriation, care and the reunification of children escaped or rescued from the LRA. We encourage armed forces of the region to establish standard operating procedures for the reception and handover of LRA children to civilian child protection actors.

We appreciate the combined efforts by LRA-affected countries, including through their contribution of troops to the African Union Regional Task Force against the LRA. We reiterate our support for the activities of UNOCA and the new implementation plan of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of activities of the LRA. We are concerned, however, that these efforts could be undermined by those in the region who wish to legitimize the criminal activities of terrorist groups in Central Africa, such as the LRA and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda. We remain gravely concerned by the humanitarian situation of internally displaced persons and refugees in LRA-affected countries and we urge the international community to maintain its support in favour of displaced populations and refugees.

Before concluding, let me say a word on the scourge of poaching in Central Africa, mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. The consequences are well known: a dramatic decrease in elephants in Africa, impact on the environment, financial shortfalls for tourism, as well as the financing of armed groups. In that regard, we support the call of the Secretary-General to consider the issue a major national and subregional

security concern requiring concerted and coordinated action, but we also believe that, as the demand for ivory is mainly outside Africa, countries of destination should also play their part within the framework of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

In conclusion, let me say that Rwanda is still confident that, despite the crisis in the Central African Republic, the LRA will eventually be uprooted from the region through the combined efforts of UNOCA, the Economic Community of Central African States, the African Union and countries of the region.

Finally, we reiterate our support for the draft presidential statement submitted by the United Kingdom.

Ms. King (Australia): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his briefing on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

Allow me to focus first on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has been committing human rights abuses that are appalling in both scale and brutality since its formation in 1987. Others have already stated the well-known figures of deaths, abductions and displacements caused by the LRA, and we all know that the LRA has continued its horrific crimes over the past months. By some estimates, as many as 275 separate attacks were reported in 2012.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrants issued in July 2005 against Joseph Kony and other senior LRA leaders remain unexecuted eight years later. We fully support the Security Council's draft presidential statement on the LRA and its call on all States to cooperate with relevant national authorities and the ICC in order to execute the ICC arrest warrants and bring to justice those responsible.

Enhanced regional and international efforts to combat the LRA have yielded positive results. We know that the LRA has been weakened and that defections have risen. We commend the African Union (AU) Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA and the progress made in operationalizing the AU Regional Task Force (AU-RTF). But despite those important efforts, the LRA continues to terrorize and victimize populations across Central Africa, exerting a disproportionate humanitarian impact on civilians, particularly women and children, because of the extent of its brutality. More must therefore be done to seize the current opportunity to put an end once and for all to that abhorrent group.

First and foremost, the crisis in the Central African Republic must be addressed. We know all too well that the LRA thrives in security vacuums and in environments of weak or, in the case of the Central African Republic, absent State authority. It is therefore all the more concerning that the Ugandan contingent of the AU Regional Task Force was forced to temporarily suspend its operations in that country. As AU Peace and Security Commissioner Lamamra told an AU support forum meeting in Addis Ababa recently, the LRA has been able to go out on a picnic since the Séléka coalition seized power by force in the Central African Republic. It is vital that the AU-RTF be able to resume its activities as soon as possible.

We welcome the efforts of AU Special Envoy Francisco Madeira and Prime Minister Tiangaye of the Central African Republic to reach agreement in that regard. We hope that that will lead to an early resumption of operations. The United Nations, the AU and the Economic Community of Central African States should also strengthen their coordination to help resolve the current crisis in the Central African Republic. Australia stands ready to consider ways in which the Security Council can support those efforts.

Secondly, we must enhance the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the LRA. The release of the United Nations regional strategy almost a year ago helped to focus attention on the threats posed by the LRA. We welcome the submission by the Secretary-General of the implementation plan for the strategy, which provides a useful overview of the action undertaken to date and the way forward. UNOCA has an important coordinating role to play in helping translate the United Nations strategy into tangible results on the ground. The successful implementation of the strategy also requires the full commitment of all stakeholders, the LRA-affected countries, which have primary responsibility, regional organizations, the entire United Nations system and international partners. Additional efforts are clearly still needed.

Coordinated and enhanced action by United Nations peacekeeping and political missions in the region — the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic People's Republic of the Congo, the

United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic — is a further integral element to the efforts under way to address the LRA threat. These include protecting civilians, sharing information on LRA activities, developing standard operating procedures, and implementing effective disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, resettlement or repatriation programmes.

As the LRA's tactics evolve, cross-border coordination and information-sharing are all the more important. As the report of the Secretary-General notes, for example, the possible use of funds from the illegal ivory trade as an important source of financing for LRA activities needs to be addressed. More must be done to develop a common operating picture of the LRA's capabilities, its areas of operation and the sources of funding and support it uses to carry out attacks.

Now more than ever, UNOCA has an important role to play in conflict prevention, early warning and mediation efforts in Central Africa. As the report of the Secretary-General notes, economic growth, while sustained, is not yet inclusive. Youth unemployment is high, women's participation in key political decision-making is low in all but a few countries, and piracy and cross-border criminal activity, including elephant poaching, have increased.

We therefore welcome the regional efforts to address those issues and the assistance that UNOCA is providing to support them. We look forward, for example, to the upcoming regional regional Summit of Heads of State and Government later this month on maritime piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, and to the regional forum on youth employment, political stability and peacebuilding to be held in the last quarter of the year.

Allow me to conclude by expressing our full support to Special Representative Moussa and UNOCA for their important contribution to conflict prevention in Central Africa.

Ms. Millicay (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by thanking the Special Representative, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his briefing. I also welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/297).

Argentina is closely following the situation resulting from the threat posed by and the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I wish to affirm Argentina's support for the regional efforts led by the African Union, which, without any doubt, have led to the recent decrease in the number of LRA attacks.

However, the LRA remains a serious threat. Joseph Kony has been able to avoid justice and lead his band of murderers and thugs for more than 20 years, continuing to commit egregious human rights violations, especially against children. I would recall here that the second report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the abuses committed in the region affected by the LRA finds Kony and his accomplices responsible for more than 100,000 deaths and for the abduction of 60,000 to 100,000 children. Those crimes must not go unpunished, and their perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Joseph Kony and his accomplices have since 2005 had arrest warrants issued against them by the International Criminal Court for numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity. Efforts must be redoubled to ensure that they are arrested.

Argentina supports the United Nations regional strategy proposed by the Secretary-General and calls on the States of the region to implement it in order to put an end, once and for all, to the threat posed by the LRA and ensure that a long-term is found. We therefore encourage the countries of the region to continue to cooperate and to provide troops and equipment for the African Union's Regional Cooperation Initiative.

As concerns the situation in the Central African Republic, focusing on today's topic, we are pleased to hear that the Uganda People's Defence Forces will soon resume their efforts to fight the LRA in their country. The Ugandan contingent must continue its efforts as part of the African Union Regional Task Force, complementing the efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic to fight the LRA.

Argentina also supports the strengthening and implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration programmes being carried out in the LRA-affected regions.

My delegation wishes to highlight the efforts of and the work carried out by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in support of the regional efforts aimed at preventing conflict and building peace and security in the countries members of the Economic Community of Central African States

(ECCAS), including the fight against the LRA. In that framework, we commend UNOCA's efforts to promote justice and the rule of law, which are indispensable conditions for the achievement of lasting peace in the region. We wish also to highlight the review, with ECCAS, of the framework of cooperation signed in May 2012, with a view to facilitating its implementation in areas including security, governance, electoral processes, illicit arms trafficking and piracy and armed robbery at sea.

In that connection, we must also stress the coordination efforts carried out with the United Nations Office in West Africa aimed at strengthening the regional fight against piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea.

Finally, Argentina supports the draft presidential statement proposed by the United Kingdom, and we ask the Secretariat to duly inform the Security Council about the situation in the region and in particular the activities of the LRA.

Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon (Republic of Korea): I should like to join other speakers in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Abou Moussa, for his informative briefing.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) remains a major threat to peace and security in Central Africa. More than 440,000 people have been displaced across the region. Unless collectively and systematically addressed, the atrocities committed by the LRA, including murder, torture, maiming and sexual slavery, as well as the recruitment of child soldiers, will continue.

It is of particular concern that children continue to come under attack by the LRA. In 2012, about 25 per cent of the LRA's victims were underage boys and girls. Last month, the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict concluded that the LRA-affected countries must make further efforts to bring LRA perpetrators to justice. The role of the Governments of the region is also critical in executing the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for Joseph Kony and his accomplices, who are still at large.

The LRA is known for funding its activities through poaching and the illegal ivory trade. It is also regarded as a serious perpetrator of transboundary trafficking in illegal materials. Its activities pose a fundamental threat to the rule of law in the entire region, and the international community must therefore deal with them as such.

Last month, the United Nations prepared an implementation plan for the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the LRA. That document (S/2013/240) provides a holistic action plan to eradicate the LRA through a division of labour as well as thematic and country-specific coordination among the relevant United Nations agencies working in the region. That represents a meaningful step forward towards strengthening the system-wide efforts of the United Nations for regional coordination. All players under this scheme should promptly share any information regarding the LRA's movements so as to provide early warning and enhance the leaflet-dropping campaign and radio-broadcast capability, with a view to encouraging LRA defections.

With regard to the African Union's counter-LRA operation, however, the African Union Regional Task Force's activities have been suspended following the Séléka's seizure of Bangui. We hope that the Task Force's operation will be fully resumed as soon as possible.

In another worrisome development, an LRA base is reportedly located in the border area between the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Sudan. We urge the transitional authorities of the Central African Republic to actively participate in the region's joint efforts in order not to provide a breeding ground for the LRA.

Let me briefly touch upon the issue of maritime piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, which is another security concern in the Central African region. Since 2011, the multinational military exercises held have greatly contributed to enhancing maritime safety in the Gulf of Guinea. We expect that the regional summit scheduled to be held in Cameroon next month will bring about substantial progress in addressing the issue of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

Lastly, we commend the continued efforts of Special Representative Moussa and his staff, who are working in a challenging environment. We also support today's presidential statement drafted by the United Kingdom.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his very comprehensive

briefing on the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/297) and the progress being made on efforts to combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I would also like to express our support for the draft presidential statement circulated by the delegation of the United Kingdom.

Morocco, which is connected to the countries of Central Africa by traditional ties of friendship and cooperation, welcomes the progress they have made in strengthening their cross-border cooperation, regional integration and economic growth. That progress, however, should not mask the growing security, political and humanitarian challenges they face and that require an urgent response. Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and the Sahel region, acts of terrorism, cross-border trafficking and poaching are having an increasingly large impact on the Central African region's stability and development. We remain concerned about the growing threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, which is unfortunately spreading farther and farther along Africa's Atlantic coast. It is a matter of vital urgency to fight this dangerous threat.

The need to strengthen interregional cooperation among the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, as well as the countries along the Gulf, is becoming increasingly apparent. In that context, we welcome regional initiatives, including the recent ministerial meeting held in N'Djamena on maritime security and the upcoming regional summit to be held in Cameroon on 24 and 25 June, bringing together ECCAS, ECOWAS, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the countries of the region. We hope that the summit will be a decisive step towards the global and effective implementation of the transregional and interregional strategy. We commend the efforts of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in the region, as well as the action and leadership Mr. Moussa has displayed in facilitating that important meeting.

Regarding the region of the Sahel, we are worried about the security repercussions that are unfortunately being increasingly felt in neighbouring regions, particularly Central Africa and the Maghreb. We commend the decision of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) at its recent N'Djamena summit to create a permanent body concerned with sustainable development and combating poverty, and a permanent security council designed to help members fight terrorism and other ills that threaten peace. Morocco is pleased to be hosting the next CEN-SAD summit as its contribution to helping improve collective management of the challenges in the Sahelo-Saharan region.

In that context, we welcome the participation of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in the various subregional and interregional conferences on subjects related to cross-border and transregional threats — including the CEN-SAD summit and the meeting organized in Rabat by the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force on strengthening border surveillance between the States of the Maghreb and the Sahel — and we hope that it will continue to participate actively in these kinds of meetings.

In the face of these growing transregional threats, we encourage the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Regional Office for West Africa to continue to improve their cooperation in support of regional efforts to fight transnational organized crime, trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and terrorism.

In the political arena, the recent crisis in the Central African Republic has revealed the fragility of the peacebuilding process. We are alarmed by the gravity of the current situation there and remain concerned about its effect on subregional stability, both as a humanitarian issue and as concerns the fight against the Lord's Resistance Army. We commend the decisive role played by the Economic Community of Central African States in managing the crisis and restoring constitutional order. In that connection, we encourage the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa to continue to support subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, particularly in the area of capacity-building, including mediation, which we consider a priority, especially in the light of recent events in the Central African Republic and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Turning to the Lord's Resistance Army, which continues to threaten the stability and lives of thousands of men, women and children in Central Africa and to undermine peacebuilding efforts, Morocco reiterates its firm condemnation of the crimes, atrocities and human-rights violations that criminal group has committed, particularly against women and children. We must

now ramp up our collective efforts to strengthen cross-border cooperation and build on progress made to date, thanks to the work done by States in the region and the various political and peacekeeping missions, in order to put an end to the LRA's presence in Central Africa. In that regard, we commend the decision of the Government of the Central African Republic to resume and rejoin regional efforts against the LRA.

We welcome the significant role played by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in combating the LRA, and the release of the implementation plan for the United Nations regional strategy to combat the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army. We encourage the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, in its coordinating role, as well as the political and peacekeeping missions and other United Nations entities in the region, to intensify their efforts to implement the strategy.

For its part, Morocco, which is affected by the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army through the contingents it contributes to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), will continue to work to protect civilians and provide humanitarian and medical aid, in accordance with the MONUSCO mandate. Bilaterally, my country also continues to provide humanitarian aid and support for capacity-building and human development to countries affected by the LRA's criminal activities.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our support and appreciation for the work of Special Representative Moussa and his team in helping to prevent conflict in Central Africa and strengthening the coordination of the activities of the United Nations and the subregional organizations of the region, where stability and security have always been a priority for the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): We too would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his briefing and his valuable work and leadership as Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

The subregion of Central Africa continues to face numerous interlinked and crosscutting challenges. As evident in the recent crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in any part of the region has ramifications beyond the borders of the State directly affected. The overall fragile security situation in the Sahel, the lack of economic opportunities, the proliferation of weapons, the threats posed by terrorism, the increasing incidents of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, cross-border criminality, including poaching, and the continued threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to civilians impact all countries of the region. Those challenges can be addressed only through a unified, well-coordinated regional and international approach that factors in the cross-border nature of those problems, as well as national ownership.

The overall focus should remain on building the capacities of the national authorities to address those threats in line with their national priorities, as well as to increase regional cooperation and collaboration. In that regard, we support the important role of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in coordinating regional efforts and addressing those issues in line with its mandate. The technical support and capacity-building initiatives of UNOCA in the areas of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and mediation, especially for the regional and subregional organizations, remain crucial in addressing the regional challenges and need to be strengthened further.

The presence and continued activities of the Lord's Resistance Army remain a major threat to the safety and security of civilians in the entire subregion. Despite several advances towards countering the scourge of the Lord's Resistance Army in the recent past, the danger posed by the group still looms large and thousands remain displaced due to LRA attacks. Furthermore, the ongoing crisis in the Central African Republic has the potential to undermine the fragile gains made against the LRA.

The LRA scourge can best be addressed through a comprehensive approach consisting of anti-LRA measures, as well as strengthening the capacity of relevant States. The political stability and strong national security institutions in the region will prevent the group from taking advantage of the security vacuum and lack of border controls. At the same time, dealing with the plight of persons displaced by LRA attacks, as well as addressing the long-term development needs of the LRA-affected areas, should remain an integral part of that comprehensive approach.

The full implementation of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the LRA, with the help of UNOCA and regional peacekeeping missions, is crucial

for countering the LRA threat. The successful implementation of the strategy against the LRA hinges on a timely and adequate availability of resources, as well as on building the requisite capacities of judicial and Government systems and the military capabilities of the countries affected by the LRA. The international community should provide the necessary political, technical and financial support for the successful implementation of that initiative, in line with the priorities identified by the African Union, as well as the principle of national ownership.

We welcome the finalization of the concept of operations and other strategic documents for the operationalization of the African Union Regional Task Force against the LRA, and encourage the LRA-affected countries to follow up on their commitments, especially by increasing their troop contributions to the Task Force. There is also an urgent need to resolve the funding gaps in order to address the humanitarian situation in the LRA-affected areas.

We welcome the important role that UNOCA, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic and United Nations peacekeeping missions in the region continue to play in the fight against the LRA. We commend in particular the important role of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in that regard. The Mission's role, through training and capacity-building of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, as well as the local authorities, support for the justice and police sectors, the implementation of early warning mechanisms and of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration programmes remain integral to the international response against the LRA. The Mission should remain focused on its core mandate to protect of civilians in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including in the LRA-affected regions of that country.

Pakistan remains strongly committed to peace, prosperity and long-term stability in the Central African subregion. We hope that the region will continue to receive the due attention and full political support of the international community, as well as that of the Security Council, to help address numerous challenges it faces.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to express our gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his comprehensive briefing. We commend the efforts of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to contribute to peace and security in Central Africa and its increased cooperation with regional and subregional institutions.

The current political, security and humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic adversely impacts the stability and security of the entire Central African subregion. The rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation — due to the rising number of refugees and internally displaced persons, an increase in the availability and illegal circulation of weapons, the potential of spillover of the conflict within the subregion and its negatives effects on the various subregional processes, including on the efforts to address the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) — highlights the urgency of restoring the rule of law and reinstating constitutional order in the country.

We appreciate the mediation efforts of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to resolve the crisis through dialogue and negotiations. At the same time, we fully concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Council consider sanctions and other measures against those who have committed gross violations of humanitarian and human rights law during the conflict.

Complex political, security, socioeconomic and humanitarian challenges in the Sahel region require a comprehensive, integrated and radical response from international and regional actors. In that regard, we welcome the decision of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States to create a permanent council for sustainable development in the fight against poverty and a permanent security council to help rid the region of terrorists and other threats to peace.

Maritime piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea present another serious threat to the security and economic development of the Central African subregion. We commend the efforts of the regional stakeholders to implement resolution 2018 (2011), and stress the importance of the upcoming regional summit of Heads of State and Government, to be held in Cameroon in late June.

We note with concern a growing menace posed by the spread of cross-border criminal activities, such as poaching and the illegal ivory trade, to sustainable peace and stability in Central Africa. The Secretary-General's report (S/2013/297) also places a particular

focus on the high rates of youth unemployment as a potential risk to the security of the subregion. UNOCA's close interaction and coordination of efforts with ECCAS and other relevant partner organizations are requisite to the success of a proposed regional forum on youth unemployment, political stability and peacebuilding in Central Africa.

We welcome the strong macroeconomic development registered in Central Africa for another consecutive period, including significant growth rates in the non-oil-producing countries. It is essential that economic revenues be channeled into concrete strategies and programmes, with the support and assistance of the international community, in order to address the root causes of chronic instability in the subregion, such as poverty and unemployment.

Despite the progress achieved in combating the Lord's Resistance Army and a decrease in the direct threat of its attacks, the group continues to be a source of insecurity in Central Africa. Given the potential for the group's re-emergence, it is of utmost necessity to ensure the uninterrupted implementation of LRA-related initiatives and activities.

The LRA-affected countries should accelerate their efforts to attain the goals set out in the United Nations regional strategy and the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA. We welcome the finalization of the implementation plan for the United Nations regional strategy, as well as the concept of operations and other strategic documents required for the operationalization of the African Union Regional Task Force. We underline the importance of the full implementation of those documents, as well as the provision of the necessary funds for that purpose.

The attention of the Governments concerned and international donor support should continue to be focused on strengthening the response capacities of the LRA-affected countries, addressing long-term development needs, providing humanitarian assistance and promoting return and recovery programmes in the affected areas.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Togo.

I would like to thank Mr. Abou Moussa for his very detailed briefing and to commend once again the work he carries out as Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

The report presented to us today (S/2013/297) makes it clear that progress has been made in recent months in strengthening democracy, the rule of law and political and economic governance. Elections have been organized in one country in particular and efforts are being made to strengthen economic growth.

The same goes for the upcoming summit in Cameroon on the subject of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, pursuant to resolution 2039 (2012). We believe that all efforts must be made to ensure the success of that summit.

Unfortunately, every time we hear of some encouraging progress, especially in countries emerging from armed conflicts, new cycles of violence emerge elsewhere, as if to remind us that the path to lasting peace is long and rife with ambushes. The recent crisis in the Central African Republic and the tragedy taking place there are a perfect illustration of this, so much so that many agree that that country became a failed State in only a few days following the attack by Séléka.

Against that backdrop, it is urgent for the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to consider the appropriate measures to take, in particular on the security and humanitarian fronts, with a view to helping the country to recover. In that regard, one such measure would be to adopt individual sanctions against the rebels responsible, who must answer for their actions before judicial institutions.

We welcome the decision just announced by the African Union to establish a rapid intervention force, which should be operational in the immediate future thanks to the contributions of troops, material support and financing from South Africa, Uganda and Ethiopia.

With regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the international community has exhibited an unprecedented level of mobilization over recent months to come to the aid of that country. The recent mission carried out by the Secretary-General to the country and other States of the region is the most tangible proof of that.

Togo wishes to repeat its thanks to all of the actors involved in seeking a lasting solution to the recurrent conflict in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern

African Development Community in that regard are praiseworthy.

My country remains convinced that with the political process that is being supported by all of the countries of the region, and, most recently, by the military component deployment of the Intervention Brigade, peace and security could be reestablished in the region as long as all parties respect their commitments and effective and coordinated follow-up on the new strategy is ensured.

That is why we regret and condemn the resumption of hostilities, on 20 May, between the Congolese army and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23). We encourage the Congolese Government to remain engaged in the Kampala talks and we appeal to the M-23 to return to the negotiating table without delay to swiftly conclude a peace agreement.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to pose a genuine threat to the civilian population, and to women and children in particular, in the areas where this armed group operates. The report of the Secretary-General confirms that, although weakened, this armed group retains enough force to pose a threat, especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic.

Despite all that, the fight against the LRA continues on all fronts, as reflected by the fact that no attacks by this criminal group have been recorded in South Sudan since the latter half of 2011, thanks in particular to the efforts made by the Government of that country, its various partners and the civilian population.

Moreover, the international community has become aware that the struggle against the LRA cannot be only a military one, but must also be fought on the judicial front. That is why my delegation believes that the success of this fight will require, among other things, the capture of the leader of the LRA, Joseph Kony, and his principal lieutenants, and their delivery to trial. In that regard, it is important for all States of the region to cooperate with the International Criminal Court to apply as swiftly as possible the international arrest warrants issued against these criminals, whose arrest would allow, without a doubt, the swift surrender of fighters, who would then have to be incorporated into an effective disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration process.

In the context of continuing efforts, we also welcome the Secretary-General's submission to the Council, on 19 April, of the implementation plan to support the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army (S/2013/240, annex). It is important that the various actions taken in the context of the fight against the LRA be accompanied on the socioeconomic front with appropriate measures, in particular by the Governments of the countries concerned and their partners, to sustainably address critical problems created by extreme poverty and youth unemployment, which are both potential threats to peace and security.

The role of key actors in the fight against the LRA, in particular of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany and the European Union, remains crucial for containing the threat posed by this criminal group, especially in terms of financing and logistics.

Beyond the criminal acts of the LRA, we also express our concern about the poaching and massacring of elephants, which are taking place in some countries in the region, and the subsequent sale of ivory that constitutes a source of funding for criminal and rebel groups. We therefore encourage the States concerned to strengthen, with the support of their partners, the security measures around parks and other protected areas where these animals live.

The causes of recurrent conflicts in Africa, in particular in Central Africa, are well known. The numerous meetings of the Security Council devoted to this subject have taken decisions to bring them to an end. What remains is for the international community, including the Council, to take further conflict-prevention measures, which have the advantage of being less costly in human, material and financial resources than peacekeeping operations and the fight against criminal groups.

To respond in general to the recurrent crises in the region, we believe that the international community should above all maintain a high-level of vigilance and react swiftly to early-warning signs of renewed instability in these countries.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the staff of UNOCA and to all United Nations, African Union and subregional organization missions that are working tirelessly to ensure the maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in Central Africa.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council reiterates its strong condemnation of the attacks and atrocities carried out by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and its violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights. The Council condemns further the LRA's recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, killing and maiming, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violence, and abductions. The Council demands an immediate end to all attacks by the LRA and urges the LRA to release all those abducted, disarm and demobilize.

"The Security Council welcomes the conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict adopted on 19 April 2013, concerning the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army. The Council calls for their full implementation.

"The Security Council welcomes the development of the implementation plan for the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the LRA as well as other strategic documents. The Council urges the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), in its coordination role, as well as the United Nations political and peacekeeping missions in the region and other relevant United Nations presences, to enhance their efforts in support of the implementation of the strategy, as appropriate and within the limits of their mandates and capacities. The Security Council also calls on the international community to provide assistance where possible.

"The Security Council reiterates its support for the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA, welcomes the finalization of the concept of operations and other strategic documents required for the operationalization of the African Union Regional Task Force, and encourages the deployment of child-protection advisers. The Council urges all regional Governments to fulfil their commitments under the Initiative, and encourages neighbouring States to cooperate with it, in order to end the LRA threat. The Council further encourages all States in the region to take measures to ensure that the LRA is not able to operate with impunity in their territory. The Council underlines the need for all military action against the LRA to be conducted in compliance with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, and to minimize the risk of harm to civilians in those areas. The Council welcomes the steps taken to deliver an enhanced, comprehensive and more regional approach to the humanitarian situation, including assistance to victims of sexual violence and other attacks, and urges further progress in this regard.

"The Security Council underlines the primary responsibility of States in the LRA-affected region to protect civilians. In this regard, the Council welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of South Sudan and Uganda to end the threat posed by the LRA, and urges further efforts from these countries, as well as from other countries in the region. In this regard, the Security Council encourages those countries affected by the LRA that have not yet done so to establish standard operating procedures for the reception and handover of LRA children to civilian child-protection actors.

"The Council expresses concern at the recent pause of counter-LRA operations in the Central African Republic in the context of the current crisis in the country due to the seizure of power by force, on 24 March 2013, by the Séléka coalition as well as the ensuing violence and looting, which worsened the humanitarian and security situation and weakened the institutions of the Central African Republic. Recognizing the need in the short term for the transitional authorities of the Central African Republic, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations to strengthen their coordination to solve the current crisis in the Central African Republic as soon as possible, and emphasizing that those responsible for any abuses or violations of human rights or violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable, the Council encourages continued coordination to allow regional counter-LRA operations to resume in the Central African Republic as soon as possible. In this regard, the

Council calls on the transitional authorities in the Central African Republic to uphold their commitment to the AU Regional Task Force and allow regional counter-LRA operations to resume without hindrance. The Security Council underlines its appreciation for Uganda's steadfast commitment and leadership to counter the LRA.

"The Council welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in tackling the LRA. In this context, the Council encourages further and reinforced efforts by MONUSCO to tackle the LRA, including through training and capacity-building of the Forces armees de la Republique democratique du Congo, support to the Joint Information Operations Centre, and implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) programme to encourage and facilitate further LRA defections.

"The Council notes the mandate of MONUSCO and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to help protect civilians in LRA-affected areas in their respective countries, and urges their continued efforts to implement this mandate, as well as the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) to cooperate and share swiftly information related to the regional threat of the LRA. The Council stresses the need for enhanced cross-border coordination, including through the adoption of common standard operating procedures and swift information-sharing between these missions, as well as among all other actors in the region, to better anticipate LRA movements and imminent threats of attack. The Council expresses concern about the continued reports of LRA attacks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the first quarter of 2013, and calls on those MONUSCO forces operating in LRA-affected areas to reinforce their efforts to target and promote defections from the LRA through active patrols and increased information-sharing.

"The Security Council takes note of reports suggesting the existence of an LRA base in the disputed enclave of Kafia Kinga, on the border of the Central African Republic and between South Sudan and the Sudan.

"The Council encourages the United Nations, the AU and ECCAS to work together, including through joint field assessments, to develop a common operating picture of the LRA's current capabilities and areas of operation, as well as to investigate the LRA's logistical networks and possible sources of military support and illicit financing, including alleged involvement in elephant poaching and related illicit smuggling. The Council calls on the Secretary-General to report on possible findings in his reports on the implementation of the United Nations counter-LRA strategy.

"The Council urges MONUSCO, BINUCA, UNMISS and other United Nations actors in the LRA-affected region to continue to work with regional forces and non-governmental organizations to promote a common approach to defections and support the DDRRR efforts across the LRA-affected area. The Council highlights the importance of programmes in support of the release, return and successful reintegration of children abducted by the LRA, in particular those targeting community acceptance of such children.

"The Security Council commends efforts by international donors to provide humanitarian assistance to LRA-affected populations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of South Sudan. The Council reaffirms the requirement for all parties to allow safe and unhindered access for humanitarian organizations to the civilian population, in accordance with international law, including applicable international humanitarian law, and the United Nations guiding principles for humanitarian assistance. The Council expresses concern about the lack of regular humanitarian access to many LRA-affected communities in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including because of poor infrastructure, and encourages increased United Nations efforts and international donor support for humanitarian access.

"The Security Council recalls that the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen on charges of, inter alia, war crimes and

crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and forced enlistment of children, have yet to be enforced, and calls upon all States to cooperate with relevant national authorities and the International Criminal Court, in accordance with their respective obligations, in order to implement those warrants and to bring to justice those responsible.

"The Security Council requests that the Secretary-General keep it informed on the activities of UNOCA, the progress of implementation of the regional strategy and the efforts being undertaken respectively by missions in the region and other relevant United Nations agencies to that end, including through a single report on UNOCA and the LRA to be submitted before 15 November 2013."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2013/6.

There are no further speakers inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.